(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that the said Spices Trading Corporation Ltd. have stopped purchases of spices; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No decision has been taken by the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Corrupt FPS Owners in UP

2162. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that most of the owners of Fair Price Shops in Central and Eastern uttar Pradesh are dishonest, unscrupulous, and corrupt; and

(b) what steps have been taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DEPTT. OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM) (SHRI VENOD SHARMA): (a) and (b) The implementation of the Public Distribution System (PDS) is the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments. The Central Government is responsible for the procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of key essential commodities such as rice, wheat, levy sugar, imported edible oils, superior kerosene oil, and soft coke to States/UTs. State Governments/UT Administrations are responsible for all operational matters relating to the distribution of commodities to the consumers within their State/UT. State Governments/UT Administrations have been delegated the authority under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 which enables them to take action against persons indulging in malpractices in the distribution of commodities under the PDS. State Government/UT Administrations undertake raids and surprise checks in addition to regular inspections as part of their enforcement functions. Central Government has advised States/Uts to set up vigilance Committees of consumers at the Fair Price Shop level to ensure people's participation in the supervision of the PDS. The Central Government has not received any specific reports from the Government of Uttar Pradesh that majority of Fair Price Shops Owners in Uttar Pradesh are corrupt, unscrupulous and dishonest.

High cost of maintenance of Surplus Stocks of Foodgrains

2163. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of FOOD be Pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of food grains reserves piling up for the last three years;

(b) the cost of maintaining and depreciation value thereof;

(c) the anticipated arrivals of foodgrains and targets for the next three years; and

(d) the reasons for not allowing free export of agricultural produce, even in the event of surplus expectations and high cost of maintenance of stocks?